

## In the Pipeline: Strengthening Iconic Senior Homes in Downtown Vancouver, Washington

Vancouver's vibrant downtown has plenty to offer: blocks of shops and restaurants, convenient public transit, and the Esther Short Park, Washington state's oldest town square, featuring a lovely rose garden and summer concert series.

The waterfront neighborhood boasts another beloved gem, a striking example of midcentury modern architecture. The 15-story Smith Tower Apartments was the first building to grace the Vancouver skyline over half a century ago. Today, the prominent cylinder remains the downtown's most iconic element.

Since 1966, Smith Tower Apartments has provided 170 affordable studio and one-bedroom apartments to low- and extremely-low-income Vancouverites 62 and older. However, the building is slated to undergo its first major modernization with support from a combined \$21 million in federal support, \$11.5 million of which was awarded to PFC as part of its \$2B grant from the EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. The programs are designed to create and preserve affordable housing, lower home heating and cooling costs, and make housing safer and more resilient against extreme weather events in communities across the United States.

Once the planned retrofit is complete, Smith Tower Apartments will achieve some of the highest energy-efficiency standards, cutting utility costs significantly. New resilience features



*Smith Tower Apartments, Vancouver, WA.*

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will protect the building against severe weather and other natural disasters. The retrofit also will add fire sprinklers throughout the building — a critical safety feature not required by code when the tower was first built in 1966.

Boosting the local economy, the work required to complete these necessary upgrades will create an estimated 200 construction jobs. For the seniors who call Smith Tower Apartments home now and into the future, the improvements will bring upgraded windows, flooring, kitchen cabinets, and other interior design enhancements. They'll also amount to peace of mind that their home meets current safety and structural standards.